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DRAFT REPORT

Addendum

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PROGRAMME QUESTIONS

Proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001

Programme 23. Public information

1. At its 33rd and 34th meetings, on 25 June 1996, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered programme 23, Public information, of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001.

Discussion

2. Many delegations expressed support for the efforts made to disseminate information through the use of new information technologies. However, some expressed reservations as some countries do not yet have the requisite technology to access that information. They urged the Secretariat to continue dissemination of information through traditional, cost-effective and far-reaching modes of information dissemination, namely, radio broadcasting and print products.

3. Some delegations also expressed concern regarding the use of costly and modern technologies in view of the present budgetary constraints. Several delegations stated that the Secretariat should undertake an evaluation of the role of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library and the information centres in the context of modern communication technologies, while bearing in mind budgetary

constraints. Other delegations suggested identification of priorities in the implementation of mandates with a view to achieving a better balance of available resources. They stressed the need to avoid overlap and duplication in the programme of work of the Department of Public Information.

4. Some delegations expressed support for the United Nations information centres and indicated that they played a crucial role in promoting global awareness about and support for the United Nations. Others indicated that the role of information centres was not adequately covered in the draft programme and felt that advances in modern communication technologies would transform the role of the information centres in certain countries, in some cases making them redundant.

5. A number of delegations indicated that public information activities in all outreach programmes should be conducted in strict compliance with established policy of maintaining full parity of treatment for all official languages of the United Nations.

Conclusions and recommendations

6. The Committee recommended approval by the General Assembly of programme 23 of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001, with the following modifications:

(a) Paragraph 23.1: Add to the penultimate sentence, after the word "internet", the word "CD-ROMs,";

(b) Paragraph 23.7: Replace, in the first sentence, the word "ensure" with "promote a positive image of the United Nations as an effective international organization relevant to the needs of the international community. To reach this goal, it will therefore be important";

(c) Paragraph 23.9: Replace "peace-building" with the words "post-conflict peace-building, development," in the first sentence;

(d) Paragraph 23.15: Replace, in the first sentence, the word "establish" with "consider, in consultation with Member States and relevant intergovernmental bodies, the establishment of", and in the second sentence, replace the word "this" with "such a" and "will" with "could".